



The Totem Poll Holiday Edition

Harford County's Election Poll Workers' Newsletter

Building a better election process one election judge at a time

Volume 3 Issue 2

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Special Points of Interest:

Aberdeen:

Mayor:

Michael E. Bennett

City Council:

Ruth E. Elliott

Bruce E. Garner

Sandra J. Landbeck

Ruth Ann Young

Bel Air:

Town Commissioner:

Brian G. Adolph

David E. Carey

Robert M. Preston



Deputy Director's Letter

"Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat. Please to put a penny in the old man's hat." Yes the Christmas season is upon us, along with Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa. So we are wishing you all a blessed and peaceful celebration.

So what's this about a "goose and a hat" you may ask? Well, I was making an analogy between the "goose," our Government, the "hat" - their hands extended, and the penny - our tax dollars. All across our country we are experiencing financial troubles, and Maryland is no exception. Our citizens are experiencing lay-offs and furloughs whether you work in government or in the private sector. And our seniors are also feeling the pinch. Salaries are being reduced, homes are being foreclosed and many people are dreading a bleak future. While, it seems, our elected officials are unaffected by this type of turmoil in their lives. The average citizen has always been called upon to tighten their belts, and make sacrifices for the greater good.

But then I decided to take heart and put this into perspective. Just as our holidays are coming and giving us a cause to partake in celebration and fellowship, so is an opportunity coming in 2010 to balance the playing field. We are given this opportunity every 2 years. It's called VOTING. It is our most powerful obligation and a most precious right as a citizen of this country. If we do not VOTE, we have no voice. If we have no voice,



Deputy Director Dale E. Livingston

we lose our liberty. And if you think that one VOTE can't make a difference, just look at the Bel Air Municipal Election that was just held this past November.

I believe that the people are concerned and that they are anxious to VOTE in 2010. I believe that no matter what is happening in our County, our State, our Country, it all comes down to a single VOTE to make the difference in any election. We always have the opportunity to change the direction in which our elected officials are going. It is just a little, but powerful thing. It is just a VOTE.

Let's all celebrate joyously during this holiday season and remember that there is another celebration coming when we can again lift up our voices in the VOTING booth.

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Kwanzaa - PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD WILL TOWARD ALL!

Wheels are in motion...sort of

No final decision has been made yet regarding the new voting system that is to be implemented for the 2010 Gubernatorial Election. In our last issue, we mentioned the new hybrid system which will allow voters to choose between voting on the touchscreen units or voting on a paper ballot.

Since the last issue, legislation has now recommended that we no longer refer to the new system as “hybrid.” Instead, it will be called “paper ballot voting with touchscreen backup.” This will mean that each precinct will have one or two touchscreens whose main usage will be for voters 65 and older.

All others can choose to use the touchscreen if they wish, but there will be voting booths available for paper ballot voting.

The State Board of Elections (SBE) is currently evaluating proposal submissions in response to its recent solicitations to acquire a Voting System Support Services Contract and an Optical Scan Voting System.

In the meantime, Harford County’s election office is already prepared for whatever voting system is implemented.

Stay tuned...



Small Elections Makes Big Difference in Harford County

On November 3rd of this year, both the City of Aberdeen and the Town of Bel Air held Municipal Elections to determine who will be calling the shots in their respective districts. For Aberdeen, the citizens arrived with eager anticipation to vote for Mayor and City Council. With over 50% of the vote, Michael E. Bennett held on to his incumbent seat for Mayor. The four City Council seats went to Ruth E. Elliott, Bruce E. Garner, Sandra J. Landbeck and Ruth Ann Young. Aberdeen had a 20% turnout for this election, which is pretty high by municipal standards.

As for Bel Air, though the turnout wasn’t as high as Aberdeen, the results, were by no means less significant. Before the Provisional Ballots were counted there was only a one vote difference between two candidates. Town Commissioner was up for grabs, with three of the five available seats going to Brain G. Adolph, David E. Carey and Robert M. Preston. These three elected members of the Board of Commissioners will hold these offices for the next four years.

Both Aberdeen and Bel Air have Municipal Elections every two years; the next election will be held on November 2, 2011.



Special Holiday Thanks!!!

Harford County Board of Elections would like to thank the following vendors who donated gift certificates for our Election Judges Brunch:

- Giovanni's
- Union Hotel
- Applebee's
- Wargo's (at Forest Hill Inn)
- Jiffy Lube
- Enotria
- Red Brick Station
- Richardson's Flowers and Gifts



Recipe for Cornbread Casserole

1 pound of ground beef or turkey (you could also use a ½ pound of ground turkey or beef along with Jimmy Dean's 16 oz Pork sausage - hot)

Add seasoned salt to meat

1 cup of self-rising cornmeal; plus additional for dusting pan

2 eggs

1 8½ -ounce of cream style corn

1 cup milk

½ cup of vegetable oil

1 medium onion, chopped

3 jalapeno peppers, finally chopped (optional)

8 ounces extra sharp cheddar cheese, grated

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Grease a 13x9-inch baking pan and sprinkle with cornmeal. Place the pan in the oven until cornmeal browns, 5 to 10 minutes. Set pan aside.

Cook meat in a large skillet over medium high heat, until brown, breaking it up with a spoon until crumbled as it cooks. Drain off fat from the meat.



In a large bowl, combine the cornmeal, eggs, corn, milk and oil. Spread half the cornbread batter over the bottom of the prepared pan and sprinkle evenly with the meat. Layer onions, peppers and cheese on top. Cover the remaining batter.

Bake the casserole until top is golden brown, about 45 minutes. Let cool before cutting.

Remembering Wilbur “Will” Penley

The Harford County Board of Elections staff would like to extend our heartfelt thoughts and prayers to Wilbur Penley and his family.

Wilbur, who was a dear friend to the election office, passed away on October 14, 2009 at age 77. He is survived by his wife, of over fifty years, Jean and his son James.

Will is fondly remembered for his hard work and wit no matter how hectic and crazy it got during an election. Will worked in the warehouse, helping with L&A, organizing the equipment delivery to the precincts while sharing his stories, humor, song and love for all of us. We won't soon forget the icy election of 2008, when it was Will who braved the storm to get an employee home while still delivering the equipment back to the election office. You will be sorely missed, Will Penley. God grant you peace and a well deserved rest. (Do they have elections in Heaven?)



Election Day by J.D. McClatchy

The older couples had voted just after dawn,
And by noon the exit polls are underway.
Some talking head opines in San Jose.
A poster leans mute and smiling on the lawn.

“As the wind blows, so the flag will wave,”
Says a cynic who is nevertheless waiting in line.
The woman in front of him has been assigned
The nearest booth where she plans, again, to save

The Republic from itself—the drama played out
In this miniature theater, with its curtain and cast.
Today will be a performance of the past,
Its fortunes and flaws, its certainty and doubt.

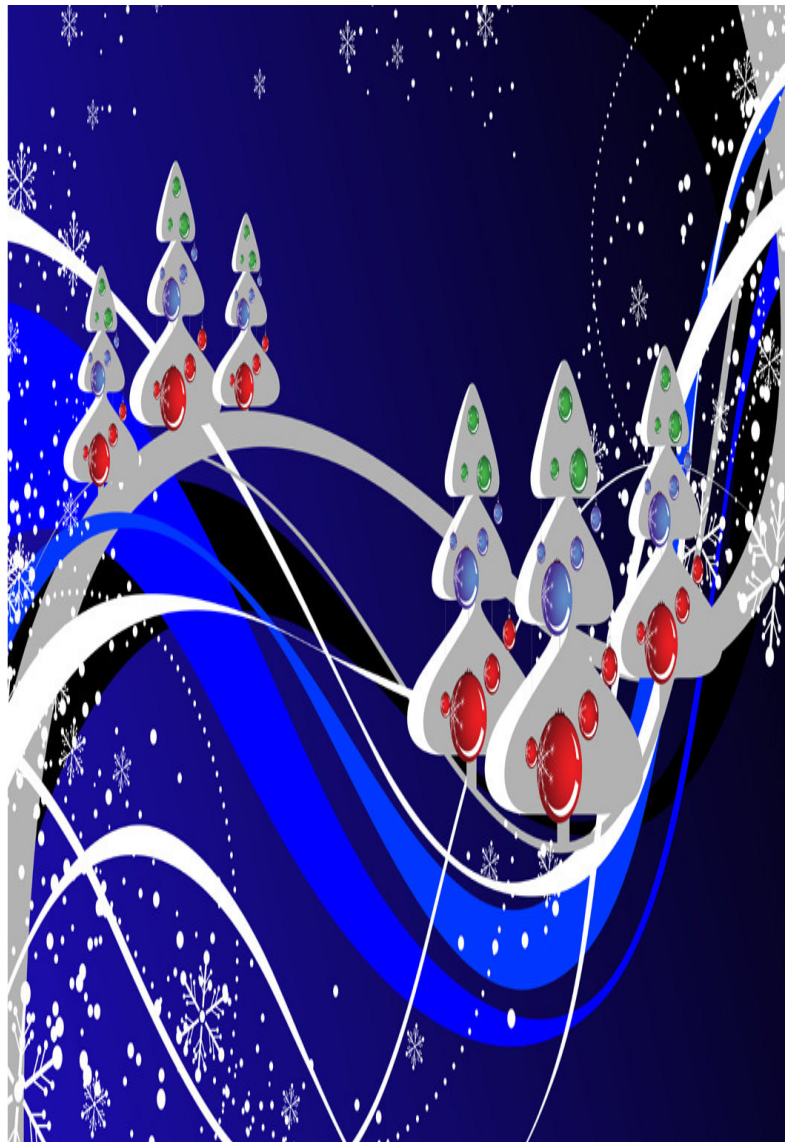
The pencil has no eraser. She makes her choice,
Determined but still uncertain how it will end,
As the Founders were as well who thought to lend
So much importance to each small impassioned voice.

But will the cynic's vote now cancel hers?
She stays behind to watch him enter the booth.
(In our democracy, we think “the truth”
Is what everyone, regardless, *secretly* prefers.)

She won't know anything but threats and trends
Until, again in the dark, but midnight's now,
She can sense what hope the numbers will allow,
And what you get when you smear or overspend.

She will sit and stare at charts on CNN.
(But aren't we redeemed by what they *cannot* show?
The struggle in each restless heart to know
The terms on which the nation's fate depends.)

She will think how, at last, millions have spoken as one,
That freedom requires an open mind and hand,
And the strength to be forgiven and understand,
And that tomorrow morning it has all just begun.



Election Merger: ES&S/Premier (Diebold)

The touchscreen units that we all have come so accustomed to monitoring and operating, now belong to ES&S (Election Systems and Software). On September 3, 2009, Premier, formally known as Diebold, officially exited the voting machine business by selling its election systems to ES&S for \$5 million. This occurred just seven years after acquiring it amid hopes of rising demand for voting technology upgrades in the wake of the 2000 presidential election fiasco.

Premier, whose main business is making automated teller machines, announced along with ES&S that the acquisition will combine the

strengths of both organizations and will result in better products and services for all customers and voters alike.

The acquisition will also create a more efficient and effective operating model that will provide a sustainable delivery platform for the election industry in the future.

ES&S, based in Omaha, Nebraska, is the world's most experienced election management company—and the only provider of end-to-end, fully integrated voting solutions to support every phase of the election process. It is because of this that they are the leading provider of total election management solutions. For nearly 40 years,

ES&S has solely focused on elections and has had a track record of producing quality results.

As the two experienced companies go forward, the combination will allow them to serve jurisdictions more effectively. By continuing to innovate and create new voting systems, software and services, the companies will be able to meet the evolving needs of their customers.

So what does this mean for our Election Judges? Not much. The touchscreen voting system will stay the same; the proposed implementation of the new paper ballot voting system, along with early voting, would've occurred

whether the merger had taken place or not.

This new business acquisition merely reaffirms the exciting Election year of 2010 that is ahead of us.

Merry Christmas indeed!



Christmas Poem

The embers glowed softly,
and in their dim light,
I gazed round the room and I
cherished the sight.
My wife was asleep, her head
on my chest,
My daughter beside me, angelic in rest.
Outside the snow fell, a blanket of white,
Transforming the yard to a winter delight.

The sparkling lights in the tree I believe,
Completed the magic that was Christmas Eve.
My eyelids were heavy, my breathing was deep,
Secure and surrounded by love I would sleep.
In perfect contentment, or so it would seem,
So I slumbered, perhaps I started to dream.

The sound wasn't loud, and it wasn't too near,
But I opened my eyes when it tickled my ear.
Perhaps just a cough, I didn't quite know,

Then the sure sound of footsteps outside in the snow.
My soul gave a tremble, I struggled to hear,
And I crept to the door just to see who was near.

Standing out in the cold and the dark of the night,
A lone figure stood, his face weary and tight.

A soldier, I puzzled, some twenty years old,
Perhaps a Marine, huddled here in the cold.

Alone in the dark, he looked up and smiled,
Standing watch over me, and my wife and my child.

"What are you doing?" I asked without fear,
"Come in this moment, it's freezing out here!"

Put down your pack, brush the snow from your sleeve,
You should be home on a cold Christmas Eve!"
For barely a moment I saw his eyes shift,
Away from the cold and the snow blown in drifts...

The red, white, and blue...an American flag.

"I can live through the cold and the being alone,
Away from my family, my house and my home.

I can stand at my post through the rain and the sleet,
I can sleep in a foxhole with little to eat.
I can carry the weight of killing another,

Or lay down my life with my sister and brother,
Who stand at the front against any and all,
To ensure for all time that this flag will not fall."

"So go back inside," he said, "harbor no fright,
Your family is waiting and I'll be all right."
"But isn't there something I can do, at the least,
"Give you money," I asked, "or prepare you a feast?"

It seems all too little for all that you've done,
For being away from your wife and your son."

Then his eye welled a tear that held not regret,
"Just tell us you love us, and never forget.

To fight for our rights back at home while we're gone,
To stand your own watch, no matter how long.
For when we come home, either standing or dead,
To know you remember we fought and we bled.
Is payment enough, and with that we will trust,
That we mattered to you as you mattered to us."

LCDR Jeff Giles, SC, USN
30th Naval Construction Regiment
OIC, Logistics Cell One
Al Taqqadum